

Evolution of Eden (2003)

Evolution of Eden is a chapter in the book, *Culture Change in Long-Term Care*. This book presents 30 works by members of the long-term care community to discuss fundamentally changing the culture of long-term care. One of these 30 works is *Evolution of Eden*.

Evolution of Eden argues that due to financial, workforce, and liability issues, nursing home institutions in their current form will not survive. Long-term care facilities must evolve to become places where elders feel at home, family members enjoy visiting, staff are respected, and the care is good, rather than places where the elderly feel isolated and institutionalized. This idea prompted the development of the Eden Alternative and the Green House Model.

The Eden Alternative began in 1992 as an effort to improve quality of life for nursing home residents. The Eden Alternative has three defining characteristics:

- The Eden Alternative is founded on 10 principles which do not change.
- The techniques that Eden makes available to those who wish to pursue the 10 principles continue to evolve.
- Innovations in long-term care are valuable only when they can be effectively practiced in the many different organizations and situations that may be brought on by a fundamental culture change.

The Eden Alternative evolved in six stages:

- Implementation of the Eden Alternative in one facility
- Replication
- Creation of the Eden Alternative Associate Training Program
- The Regional Coordinator and Training Program
- Next version of the Eden Alternative
- Emergence of the Green House Model

The Green House Model focuses on developing care that is warm, smart, and green. A Green House is a small community home where people requiring nursing services can live and receive care. The Green House is designed to resemble a home in every way with useful technology to ensure safety, promote quality of care, ensure rigor in record keeping, and promote community and family involvement. The chapter addresses issues in designing Green Houses to operate within the parameters of existing funding and regulations for long-term care. Some of the goals and issues elaborated upon are:

- Creating and maintaining warm environments
- Reversing the trend toward large facilities in the interest of economic imperatives and the needs of professionals
- Providing a council of elders, caregivers and family members to oversee the social environment
- Balancing formal and informal codes of conduct
- Exploring the potential for technology to improve care

- Promoting life, laughter, and companionship
- Addressing concerns such as fire safety, medical attention, elopement, abuse, and neglect
- Creating superior clinical outcomes
- Creating superior quality of life
- Delivering a higher level of care and improved quality of life for the same cost as existing facilities
- Assessing care standards, quality of life, and staff satisfaction through research and evaluation

This 16 page chapter can be found in *Culture Change in Long-Term Care*, published by The Haworth Social Work Practice Press. It can be purchased from the Haworth Press, Inc. website at <http://www.haworthpress.com>.